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**DODD AND CONYERS INTRODUCING**  
**COMPREHENSIVE ELECTION REFORM LEGISLATION**

*Washington, D.C.* - Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT), Ranking Member on the Senate Rules Committee, and Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Ranking Member on the House Judiciary Committee, announced that they will be working together in seeking changes to our nation's elections system this Congress. Dodd introduced S. 17, the Voting Opportunity and Technology Enhancement Rights Act of 2005 ("VOTER Act") Monday, and Conyers will introduce a House companion version based in significant part on the Senate bill shortly.

Among other things, their legislation will provide for a nationwide federal write in/absentee ballot; require states to provide for a voter verified ballot; insure that provisional ballots cast anywhere in a state are counted; eliminate disparities in the allocation of voting machines and poll workers; mandate early voting and election day registration procedures; and protect against improper purging of registration lists in federal elections.

"It is imperative that we have elections that count every vote of every eligible voter," declared Dodd and Conyers. "A provisional ballot cast anywhere in the state of Ohio should count just as it does in the state of Iowa. There is no reason that voters in inner city areas should be forced to wait in lengthy lines, while their counterparts in the suburbs are able to vote immediately. If voters in Oregon can vote early, why can't voters in Michigan, and if citizens in Idaho enjoy same day registration, why can't voters in Florida?"

"Our elections are the very foundation of our democracy. We've made great strides in repairing cracks in that foundation, but clearly we still need to do more to strengthen and reinforce each American's right to vote and have that vote counted," said Dodd. "This measure can hopefully act as the democratic mortar to anchor one of our nation's most precious rights and ensure that all voters are treated equally on election day."

Conyers stated "Our nation has just endured the second consecutive presidential election which came down to a single state, and that state – Ohio – was riddled with irregularities and the appearance of partisan manipulation. If there is any issue that is central to our democracy, it is insuring that eligible voters are freely able to participate in our elections. I intend to do everything I can to insure that this issue does not go away until we have a set of uniform and non-discriminatory rules that respects all of our citizens' right to vote."

In 2001, in the wake of the myriad problems that surfaced in Florida and around the nation in the presidential election, Sen. Dodd and Rep. Conyers jointly introduced election reform legislation that ultimately passed into law as the Help America Vote Act.